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For Immediate Release

Judicial Nominating Commission announces nominees for new Daviess County Family Court judgeship

FRANKFORT, Ky., July 12, 2016 – The Judicial Nominating Commission, led by Chief Justice of Kentucky John D. Minton Jr., today announced nominees for a new Family Court judgeship in Daviess County. Daviess County is the 6th Judicial Circuit.

The attorney selected for the post will be the first Family Court judge for Daviess County. The Judicial Branch requested the judgeship in its 2016-2018 biennial budget bill and the 2016 Kentucky General Assembly approved the funding.

The three nominees for the judgeship are attorneys Julia Hawes Gordon of Maceo, Susan Candelaria Montalvo-Gesser of Owensboro and Angela Lynn Thompson of Owensboro. Each has practiced family law and volunteered with organizations focused on helping families and children.

Gordon is in private practice. She earned her juris doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law.

Montalvo-Gesser is an attorney with Kentucky Legal Aid. She earned her juris doctor from the University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law.

Thompson is in private practice and is a domestic relations commissioner for Daviess County. She earned her juris doctor from the Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law.

Family Court

Family Court is a division of Circuit Court. In counties that have a Family Court, the court has primary jurisdiction in cases involving family issues, including divorces, adoption, child support, domestic violence and juvenile status offenses.

Judicial Nominating Commission

The Judicial Nominating Commission helps fill judicial vacancies by appointment when a vacancy occurs outside of the election cycle. The Kentucky Constitution established the JNC. Ky. Const. § 118; SCR 6.000, et seq.

Judicial Nominating Process

When a judicial vacancy occurs, the executive secretary of the JNC publishes a notice of vacancy in the judicial circuit or the judicial district affected. Attorneys may recommend someone or nominate themselves. The names of the applicants are not released. Once nominations occur, the individuals interested in the position return a questionnaire to the Office of the Chief Justice. Chief Justice Minton then meets with the Judicial Nominating Commission to choose three nominees. Because the Kentucky Constitution requires that three names be submitted to the governor, in some cases the commission submits an attorney's name even though the attorney did not apply. A letter naming the three nominees is sent to the governor for review. The governor has 60 days to appoint a replacement and his office makes the announcement.

Makeup of the Judicial Nominating Commission

The commission has seven members. The membership is comprised of the chief justice of Kentucky (who also serves as chair), two lawyers elected by all the lawyers in their circuit/district and four Kentucky citizens who are appointed by the governor. The four citizens appointed by the governor must equally represent the two major political parties, so two must be Democrats and two must be Republicans. It is the responsibility of the commission to submit a list of three names to the governor and the governor must appoint a judge from this list of three.

Administrative Office of the Courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort is the operations arm for the state court system. The AOC supports the activities of nearly 3,400 court system employees and 403 elected justices, judges and circuit court clerks. As the fiscal agent for the state court system, the AOC executes the Judicial Branch budget.

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